University of Minnesota Libraries, Bigheads Round Robin
June 2005

University wide news:

The University of Minnesota has embarked on a strategic initiative to reposition the University as a top research institution. Three colleges are being dismantled with units being absorbed by other colleges. The consequences of these administrative and possibly physical shifts for the Libraries are not clear. However, we have recently learned that the Libraries will receive a significant increase to our acquisitions budget base.

ILS:
We migrated to version 16 of Aleph on January 31, 2005. The migration and training went well, but we suffered about a month of bad response time resulting in a slow recovery. We have now caught up and mostly eliminate the backlogs from that time. We will migrate to version 17 this summer, and we hope to see implementation of ARC, the Aleph reporting system sometime this summer.

Technical Services Organization Staffing:
Our reorganization into more function based sections and the related reorganization of office space is close to completion. We are pleased with the preliminary results of our decision to redirect staff lines to hire a metadata librarian, a special formats cataloger, and paraprofessional staff to support special formats (including e-resources) cataloging, special collections cataloging, and serials processing. Our loss of on-going positions in favor of one-time funding dollars has a positive side effect: more of our cataloging professionals and para-professionals are gaining skills as supervisors and special project managers.
An IT initiative to explore a peer consultant model may have additional impact on our staffing; the proposed model would lead to a higher level of skill sets and independence for all staff and less centralized microcomputer support.

Data and Measurement:
In the past, we were woefully lacking in system-generated data to measure performance, establish benchmarks, and inform planning. A small group of technical services staff has been working steadily on this issue and we now routinely generate three data counts (numbers of orders, approvals, titles cataloged) each month through a combination of system report manipulation and manual searching. More glamorous and exciting results have come from the group's work to generate reports and graphs to support projects: an interactive chart to assist collections managers to interpret the circulation history of the collection, charts for space planning, and charts analyzing the distribution of dollars by vendor.

Process improvement:
The University of Minnesota Libraries has embarked on a process improvement project to address all activities from 'Selection to Access' for monographs (in all formats). This is a collaborative effort co-owned by Collections Development, Academic Programs and Access Services (in which Technical Services is a department). R2 has been hired to work with us this summer. Technical Services will be deeply involved. The Project Team is experimenting with the use of wiki as a device for the project group to share documentation and as a communications device to reach all affected library staff.

Batch loads and work flows.
We are very pleased that we could fit in our first load of SFX MARCit records between our version 16 and version 17 migrations. Initial reactions are positive. The first load occurred in May. We have also run our catalog arrears (not including special collections) through Marcadia with good results; we soon will have a routine to run Marcadia searches for material sent to the stacks with less than full cataloging.